

[William Holmes 7 5 201-1]

THE
COUNTRY CLERGYMAN'S
A D V I C E
TO HIS
PARISHIONERS,

EXPLAINING
What They are to BELIEVE, and DO,
in order to be SAVED.

ADDRESSED chiefly to those who are of the
YOUNGER SORT.

Holmes (44)

OXFORD,

Printed for DANIEL PRINCE, near the *Clarendon*
Printing House; Sold by JOHN RIVINGTON,
Bookseller to THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, in *St. Paul's Church-*
Yard, London.

M DCC LX IX.

[Price 3d. or 1l. 1s. per Hundred,]

1568/1635.



TO THE
READER.

ALTHOUGH this little Book was designed for the use of a particular Parish, for those especially of the Younger Sort in it, bred mostly to labour, and in a low station of life; yet it may not be unprofitable to all Persons who are seriously disposed, and will dispense with the plainness and simplicity of style in which it is written. Whether the present Age is worse than the foregoing, is not easy, nor very material, to determine. It is enough to say, and more (one would wish) than need be said, that Books of this kind are never unseasonable. If this is as well accepted as it is meant, it will not fail of producing good effects. If it shall give occasion to any one good

action, or thought, it will not be entirely fruitless; but, if it shall contribute to the *saving a Soul from Death*, the Author will have great reason to bless God that he hath thus bestow'd some part of his time.

As he hereby shews a charitable inclination to promote the Salvation of others, let them return the obligation, by making his endeavours effectual; that so He, by Their means, as well as They, by His, may, through the mercies of God to both, and the merits of His Blessed Son our Redeemer, be everlastingly happy in the world to come.

THE
COUNTRY CLERGYMAN'S
A D V I C E.

Children, Beloved in the Lord!

AS it hath pleased Almighty God to call me, although greatly unworthy, to take care of some part of his Holy Church; so am I firmly persuaded, that He will one day require at my hands an account how I have discharged this trust. That I may not appear then wholly wanting in the performance of my duty, I take this method of addressing myself to *You*, putting every one of you in remembrance of the Engagements ye are under by Baptism; explaining to you, in a familiar way, the whole *belief* and *practice* of a Christian; and exhorting you to the performance of every Christian duty. And *God is my witness*, that I am very desirous that all of you, as ye grow in years, may grow also in *grace*; that ye may all *know God from the least to the greatest*, and obey Him as ye ought, living as becometh Christians, and *shining as lights in the world*.

REMEMBER then, my dear Children, that there was once a time, when each of you was brought

to God in Baptism; being entered into Christ's Church, by the sprinkling of Water, as He himself has appointed. The sprinkling of Water may seem to you as a thing in itself of but small account, and so indeed it is; but in Baptism it is a matter of the utmost concern, insomuch that they who wilfully neglect it have no sort of title to the promises made to mankind in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For He has been pleased to make it the ordinary means of admitting persons into His Church; and therefore without it no one can be said to be in covenant with God, or to have any assurance of being saved. *Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, (says our blessed Saviour) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God: and, He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved.* For this reason ye were baptiz'd, when as yet ye were *Infants*; and, from the beginning, it has been a custom in the Church to do the same: for our forefathers thought very justly, that it could never be too early to enter into covenant with God. And provided any security could be given, that Children, when grown up, should be taught what had been done for them, and instructed how to perform the *Engagements* which were entered into in their names, it seemed to them most expedient to admit such to Baptism, although the Children were not then capable of fulfilling the terms of it. This gave occasion for the requiring Sureties, or what we call *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, in Infant Baptism; persons who have been baptized themselves, and are of good and pious conversation in the Church. These undertake to teach the Children they have answered for at the time of Baptism (as soon as they are able to learn) *what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have made by them their Sureties.* They are to instruct them

them in the nature of Baptism, and the obligations they are under thereby : *to exhort them to hear frequently the word of God ; to see that they are taught to read and understand the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in their own Mother Tongue ; and, finally, they are to take care, that they be virtuously brought up, to lead a Godly and a Christian Life.*

THESE instructions, I trust, Ye have received from your own Godfathers and Godmothers ; or at least from your *Parents*, whose duty it is also to give you religious instruction. Permit me to join with them in this good work ; as, by God's appointment, I also have a share with them in the care of your Souls. *Simon, (saith our blessed Saviour) lovest thou me more than these ? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord ; thou knowest that I love Thee. He then saith unto him, Feed my Lambs.* The teaching Youth the Grounds of Christianity, and instilling into them the Principles of it in their tender years, is, it seems, a necessary consequence of the love of Christ, and the principal duty of the Ministers of the Church. And besides the Benefit, which ye yourselves may receive from me in this labour of love, it may not be unprofitable to those of *riper* years ; who, when they see the instructions here given to you, may be led to reflect upon themselves, and may from hence take occasion of ordering their lives more suitably to their Christian calling.

FIRST then let me, in a few words, acquaint you with the *nature* and *advantages* of that most Holy Religion into which ye are baptized. It is a Religion built upon the surest foundation, no less than the hopes and expectations of good men in all ages ; the testimony of *Prophecies*, even from the beginning of the world ; and the actual Reve-

lation which God was pleased to make of Himself to mankind, by sending *His blessed Son* to dwell amongst them: who, in their flesh, and with their infirmities, but without sin, did, for some space of time, wholly employ Himself in teaching them the way to everlasting Life, confirming the truth of what he said by many *Miracles*, which no one could have wrought except he had been sent from God. This holy Person, called in Scripture *the Word of God*; who, *in the beginning, was with God, and was God*; by whom *the world* is said to have been made, and all things therein; and who was of such high dignity that He *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*: this holy Person, I say, did constantly and openly teach all men, wherever He came, that there would be most certainly a future state of Rewards and Punishments: to which all men, in all parts of the earth, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, shall be called by a general Resurrection of their Bodies from the dead, and shall stand at the seat of His Judgment, to receive their sentence from Him, according to what they have done in their lives, *whether it be good or evil*. Farther; he taught them that, there was no way of being reconciled to God, but *through Him*: that God's anger against them for the transgression of their first Parents, and their own actual sins, can only be pacified by a stedfast belief in Him and his doctrines, and by a sincere and willing obedience to his commands: that although Repentance makes no amends for faults that are past, and therefore is of no value in the sight of God; yet, if real, and not too long delayed, it will be accepted through faith in Him, and through the merits of His sufferings and death: that hereby all sins will be forgiven to men; be they ever so great,

great, or ever so often repeated : that whatsoever they shall ask of God, faithfully, in His name, and shall be convenient for them, shall be granted : that, as He was himself a sacrifice and atonement for the sins of men, so He would continue, to the end of the world, a Mediator for them with God, always soliciting their pardon : and that, during His absence from them, and whilst He was employed in this good and charitable office, He would cause the holy Spirit of God to reside amongst them ; assisting and comforting them under all the trials and temptations of this mortal state, and preparing them for an eternal state of happiness and glory.

THIS is the sum and substance of the Christian Profession. And, blessed be God's holy name, who has given *You* an opportunity of taking it upon you. Make it your constant prayer to God, that He would be pleased to endow *You* with *that wisdom which is from above* ; that he would enlighten your minds with the knowledge of your duty, and give you grace to practice it ; that so ye may lead your lives answerably to this profession, and finally obtain the promise of everlasting life.

BUT, to be more particular : if ye would learn farther, what are the benefits ye reap from being *Christians* ; ye will find them briefly, yet fully, summed up in the Catechism of our Church, which ye were once taught to repeat, and do now (I hope) desire to understand. It is there said, that by Baptism ye are made *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. These are privileges so great and glorious, that human nature might well be thought incapable of them. But so far has it pleased Almighty God to be mindful of Man, and so much has his love abounded towards us in Christ Je-

fus, that ye are most certain of all these advantages, if ye behave in all things as *becometh Christians*.

IN the first place, ye are *Members of Christ*; united, not to His natural body, (for that were a thing impossible) but to His spiritual body, which is *the Church*; that Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance. This Society of Men our blessed Saviour is pleased to call *His Body*, of which He himself is the Head. *The Church* (says St. Paul) *is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of the body, the Church*. And as the members of the natural body, being united to the head, do receive life, and sense, and motion from thence; so Christians, as members of the Church, being united to Christ, receive spiritual life and motion from Him. *By Him all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*. Again; as the body (that is, the natural body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are yet but one body; so also is Christ (that is, the Church of Christ :) *for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*. And, as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ. *Therefore ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*. Now, by being members of Christ, ye are assured that ye are continually under the more especial care and direction of God's Holy Spirit: that, as the head contrives and orders every thing for the support and welfare of the members of your own bodies; so does Christ, your head, always watch over and preserve You. Nay, ye are now become particular
objects

objects of his tenderness and pity: for, as in your own bodies, when any one of the members is hurt the head suffers with it; so is Christ, your head, concerned in all your afflictions, and will either deliver you out of them, or support you under them, and in the end turn them to your advantage. Now, if this is the case of those who are so happy as to be *members of Christ*, consider the deplorable state of such persons as remain excluded from the Christian Church, notwithstanding the frequent opportunities they have had of entering into it. As they have not yet *put on Christ*, most certain it is that they are still *dead in their trespasses and sins*. And, although they should perform good works, yet, not being first reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, their goodness is nothing worth. Consider likewise the still more deplorable state of those persons, who, having entered into covenant with God by Baptism, do afterwards divide themselves from the Church of Christ, and cut themselves off from that body of which they were members. Such are they (if any such there be) who have entirely renounced their Christianity: such are they also, who have wholly abandoned and given up themselves to a wicked course of life.

In the first ages of the Christian Church, it was usual to cut off such members from the body of Christ by excommunication; that is, they were turned out of the Church for a time, and not suffered to communicate with other Christians, until they had repented of their faults. This power was given to his Church by Christ Himself, when he tells His Apostles, that *Whatsoever they bound on earth should be bound in heaven; and, whatsoever they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven*. The Church, at present, is cautious and tender in the use

use of this authority; more so perhaps than is consistent with its own peace, or the good of souls. But wicked and profligate men, although they are suffered to continue in the Church, are by no means members of Christ's body; no more than a dry withered branch is a part of the vine, because it is not cut off from the vine; or a dead mortified limb is a part of the body, because it is not separated from the body. As they are grown useless, being *past feeling*, they are an encumbrance to the body, and may probably do great hurt to it; but they cannot themselves receive any benefit from it; for they are not vitally united to Christ, who is the head of it, and therefore they do not partake of the influences of His grace, neither are they quickened by His Holy Spirit. Finally, consider that as ye are now become members of Christ's body, *the Church*, by Baptism; ye ought not only to reverence Christ, who is your head, but also to *love one another*. The members of your own bodies teach you this useful lesson; for *they* never abuse, nor injure one another: on the contrary, if any one of the members is hurt all the rest immediately join in comforting and cherishing it. And so it should be amongst Christians, or the members of Christ's body: according to the Apostle, *All the members should have the same care, one for another; and, whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it*. For think with yourselves, how unnatural it would be for a man to hurt *himself*; how strange, if the hand should strike the foot, or the foot should trample upon the hand. But so it is with Christians, when they envy or quarrel with one another: if one member is hurt, the whole body is wounded, and the head is grieved; that is, the Church

Church of Christ is disgraced, and Christ, who is the head of it, is provoked thereby. There is now then so close an union amongst you, that, out of very *self-interest*, ye ought to do good one to another; for if ye are not at peace with one another, ye are divided against yourselves. It may be said very properly of you in your present situation, that *the merciful man doeth good to his own soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh*. For he amongst you, who assists another, is so nearly related to him, that he may be said to be *a benefactor to himself*; and he that injures another may, upon the same account, be said to be his *own enemy*.

BUT to proceed: Secondly, Ye are not only members of Christ, but ye are likewise *the Children of God*, another privilege which ye receive by Baptism. Now here ye must consider, what it is to be *a Child of God*. As God created all mankind, they all may be said, in some sense, to be the children of God; but Ye are the children of God in an higher sense, as He has adopted you, and chosen you out of the rest of the world, taking you into His more particular favour. Those who never were baptized, although they have had constant opportunities of being so, are *children of God's wrath*, obstinate and disobedient, continuing still in sin, and under the curse: but ye have recovered the favour of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, being obedient to His will. And although, by nature, ye were strangers and enemies to God; yet now, by Baptism, ye are taken into the family of God, and are entitled (by His good pleasure) to all His mercies and blessings. *Ye are all the children of God* says the Apostle, *by faith in Christ Jesus*; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ: and if ye be Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's*

ham's seed, and heirs, according to the promise. And again; As many (says he) as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Hence our blessed Saviour is said to give power to as many as received Him to become the sons of God. And he is not ashamed (according to the Apostle to the Hebrews) to call them brethren; as we find he does, in many parts of the holy Scriptures. This it is to be the children of God; and thus well are ye assured that all of You are such. Consider then the honour to which ye are advanced: ye have the same Father with Christ himself, who is God blessed for ever. Ye are not only members of Christ's body therefore, but in some respect equal to Christ himself. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Hereby ye are assured, that God will bear with the untowardness of your nature, will pity your infirmities, and favourably hear your requests: that He will supply your wants, reward your well-doings, and gently correct your miscarriages: which are all acts of fatherly affection. Your fathers here on earth bear a love and affection for you, beyond what ye yourselves ever felt or can conceive; judge then, what bowels of compassion, what pity and tenderness your heavenly Father has for you, whose creatures ye are; who is all goodness, as He has all power; and is as willing to bless you, as He is capable of so doing. Consider also the duty that lies upon you by being made

made the children of God. At the same time that ye obey your earthly parents, remember that ye have a *Father also in Heaven*. Make it your chief business to please *Him*; for He is your best friend. Do not oblige, or excuse yourselves to, your parents here by any thing which ye know will be offensive to your heavenly Father: neither make mention of *the name of God* lightly, and in your ordinary discourse; for His name is holy, and must not come into your mouths upon any but solemn occasions, when ye beg of Him to relieve your wants, or return Him thanks for his blessings, or are saying something which tends to the advancement of his honour and glory. Do nothing, in short, which is sinful; for thereby ye not only offend the Majesty of Almighty God, but abuse the Goodness of a most loving and tender Father. Again; consider the bad state of those who are not of God's Family. Do not despise or insult them, who, by being not baptized, are not restor'd to God's favour; but look upon them as unhappy children, who are forsaken and turned out of doors (as it were) by your heavenly Father, because of their disobedience. Endeavour to reconcile them to God, if possibly you can, by exhorting them frequently and earnestly to faith and repentance. Bring them home from that strange country, where they are now wandering, naked, and almost starved, *feeding upon husks with swine*; and endeavour to lay them in the bosom of your Father, always open to receive them, that they may live in the kingdom of the Gospel, and be fed with *the bread of life*. Have compassion for all men; and let it be your prayer to your heavenly Father, that, in his good time, He would bring the whole world into his Family, the Church; that,

and ye might all be saved by his grace; with
 ben

with one mouth, as *dutiful Children*, we may all glorify Him here, and be glorified by Him, as his *blessed Children*, hereafter.

AND this leads me, Thirdly, to consider another benefit ye have received by being baptiz'd; namely, That thereby ye are made *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. If *children*, says the Apostle, *then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*. This inheritance, it seems, is the necessary consequence of your being children of God. It will be well worth your while, therefore, to know what this inheritance is; what that kingdom of Heaven of which ye are made heirs by Baptism. Now St. Paul tells you, *That ye are justified by God's grace, that thereby ye may be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life*. And St. Peter says, *that by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we are begotten to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us*. The Apostle to the Hebrews likewise tells you, *that Christ is heir of all things*; and, in another place, *that we are joint Heirs with Christ*. Whence it may be concluded, that ye have a title to the joys and glories of heaven; for which the word of God Himself is your security, and His Holy Spirit your assistance in obtaining them. What *the joys of heaven* are, of which ye are heirs, is beyond the capacity of the mind of man to conceive, and therefore cannot be described. It is sufficient for you to know what the Gospel hath revealed, That in heaven there will be no more *sorrow, nor temptation, nor fear, nor death*: that, on the contrary, ye will be perpetually entertained with the wonders of God's glory, and delighted with the contemplations of His goodness: that your minds will be filled with holy joy; and that you will be thoroughly satisfied

fied with your happy state; and so continue for
 ever. This is the Inheritance of a Christian.
 But, as ye ever hope to succeed to it, prepare
 yourselves for it; remembering that *without holi-
 ness no man shall see the Lord.* Let the joy which
 is set before you encourage you to press forward;
 and make it your utmost care, that ye do not lose
 that noble prize, which is proposed to you as the
 reward of your labours. As *your treasure is in
 heaven*, so let your hearts be there also. Be not
 over solicitous concerning the things of this world.
 Be not afraid of its troubles, nor fond of its va-
 nities. Do not greedily seek after, or contend
 about honour, wealth, or any of those trifles,
 which *the children of this world* are so fond of.
 For yet a little while, and all these things shall
 be removed out of your sight. This world, with
 all the pomp and splendor of it, shall vanish away;
 and a new scene of affairs shall be opened, wor-
 thy your utmost attention. In the progress of
 your lives, ye will meet perhaps with many
 Christians, who seem to have forgot that they are
heirs of the kingdom of heaven: all their thoughts
 seem to be employed in making provision for this
 life; as though that were accounted lost time,
 which is spent in securing or advancing their in-
 terest in the life to come. And, though these
 men are, by some, called *wise and prudent*; be
 assured of this, That there can be no greater in-
 stance of human folly: for they die in the midst
 of these their worldly cares; are snatched from
 their estates here, and are in danger of losing the
 inheritance, which was designed for them here-
 after. Let it be *Your* chief business to secure
 your best, and dearest interest. *Seek first the king-
 dom of God, and his righteousness*; for, it matters
 but little what your circumstances are in this life,
 if

if so be that ye take good heed, not to be disinherited in the life to come. *For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

HITHERTO I have set before you the great privileges and advantages of the Christian profession, into which ye are baptized; and have taken occasion to add a word of advice at the conclusion of every particular. And, although the hopes of a *Christian* are so valuable, that, one would think, he should want nothing else to prompt and oblige him to a steady performance of his duty; yet I must put you in mind, that it is not only your *interest* to live in obedience to the Gospel of Christ, but ye are bound by a solemn declaration and *vow*, made at the time of your receiving Baptism, that ye *will* so do. Ye did then promise, by your Godfathers and Godmothers, that ye *would renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh*: that ye *would believe all the articles of the Christian faith*: and that ye *would keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life*. This is called the *baptismal vow*; which, being made for *You*, and in *your* names, it lies upon *You* to perform, as it is indeed *your* concern, and in *your* power alone to do it.

Now, in the first place, ye have promised to *renounce the Devil and all his works*. And very fitting it is, that every Christian should make this declaration at his Baptism. For St. John says, *For this purpose was God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil*: that is, the kingdom of Christ was set up in opposition to the kingdom of that *evil Spirit*; and therefore it is necessary that *Christians*, or the subjects of Christ's kingdom,

kingdom, should enter into an engagement to be faithful to Him; and to bid defiance to *the Devil*, and all the stratagems he makes use of to seduce men from their obedience to God. By lifting yourselves under the banner of Christ, and promising to renounce the Devil and all his works, ye have given assurance to the Church, that ye will in no-wise countenance and support the growing power of sin; that ye will, on the contrary, by your own *examples*, and by *every other method* of which ye are capable, endeavour to subdue it, and hinder it from prevailing in the world. Ye have declared, that ye will always oppose it, in every shape, and under every denomination, so far as is befitting your respective stations; and that ye will maintain an utter abhorrence of every thing which ye know to be displeasing to God.

THAT ye may faithfully discharge this promise suffer me to give you a few plain directions. Let it remain deeply imprinted in your minds, as an infallible truth, that of all *evils* which happen to mankind *Sin is the greatest*. Poverty, Sickness, and Death are called evils, because they are grievous to be borne, and therefore we have a natural abhorrence of them; but they are really not such, being oftentimes attended with good and happy consequences. But *Sin* brings with it regret of mind, which makes us uneasy here; and draws after it the destruction of our Souls, which will make us for ever miserable hereafter. *Sin* therefore is truly an evil; and the only one ye can reasonably stand in dread of. If Ye can preserve yourselves from it, or, at least, sincerely endeavour to do it; ye have nothing to apprehend from the displeasure of God, or the wicked designs of Men, or the malice and subtilty of the Devil. But remember, that, as great an evil as

Sin

Sin is, and as fatal as it may be to your souls, yet, in your very nature, ye are most strongly inclined to it, especially some kinds of it, which, with your utmost constancy and resolution, ye will find it a difficult matter to resist. Never trust therefore to *your own* strength, but pray to God daily, That, with the power of His grace, He would be pleased to assist your endeavours, and give success to the means which ye make use of, for the preservation of your innocence. More particularly, make it your humble request to Almighty God, That he would protect you from falling into those sins, which are properly *sins of the Devil*; as he seems more especially concerned in tempting men to them, from whence therefore he takes his name. Such are *lying, slandering, pride, and revenge*; sins, in which the foundation of the Devil's kingdom was laid, and to which the increase of it in the world is chiefly owing. These sins, by this part of your baptismal vow, ye are chiefly engaged to guard against; and be assured, that although the power of your ghostly enemy is very great, God will enable you to resist it, if ye earnestly beg his help and protection. *If ye draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto you*; and, when ye perceive yourselves inwardly strengthened by God's Holy Spirit, be sure to obey the motions and directions of it: so will He continue in you, and dwell with you, and effectually deliver you from falling by temptation.

SECONDLY, By your baptismal vow, ye have engaged to *renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world*. The world is called *wicked*, although made by the power of God, and governed by his providence; because, through the lusts and passions of men, it administers to you many occasions

casions of falling into sin. Hence it is that the Apostle declares, That *Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.* And our Blessed Saviour, for the same reason, bids us *not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world; for, if any man love the world, says he, the love of the Father is not in him.* The *vanities* of the world are all those things, which, in the eyes of sinful men, seem desirable; although there is no real goodness in them, nor any true satisfaction arising from them. Such more particularly are *Riches*, and *Honour*; which every good Christian should so far renounce, as not to be too desirous of the one, or too ambitious of the other. By the *pomps* of the world, it is probable, that the expensive *shews*, and barbarous and obscene *sports*, made use of by the *Heathens* in honour of their false Gods, were principally meant; and accordingly, in the early times of Christianity, it was unlawful for a Christian to be present at such entertainments. But the words likewise denote all that *excess* of every kind, which men in high station more particularly are betrayed into by their pride. Magnificence and grandeur, if truly such, are not unbecoming; and are perhaps necessary to some stations of life. But *extravagance* and *luxury* are follies of pernicious consequence, tending to draw off the thoughts of men from religious duties, and to alienate their minds from God. These *vanities* therefore ye have renounced in Baptism, as destructive of Christianity. Ye have vowed, That ye will not exceed the bounds of *moderation*, or the rules of *sobriety*, in the enjoyment of the things of this life; that ye will not set your hearts upon them, nor be greedily desirous of them; that ye will rather learn to despise them, especially when they

they come into competition with your future hopes ; and, that ye will steadily pursue your only true interest, that of *the salvation of your Souls* ; notwithstanding the temptations, which may be laid in your way, to seduce and divert you from it. Even the innocent pleasures of life ye are so far resolved against, that they shall not employ *too much of your time* ; lest they should take possession of your minds, and cause you to contract such a fondness of the world, that ye cannot part with it, without great reluctance. Ye have vowed, in short, to *set your affections on things above* ; although ye do take a reasonable satisfaction, as ye ought, in the conveniencies and blessings of life ; and that ye are ready to resign these most willingly, whensoever it shall please God to take *them from you, or you from them* ; being prepared, and glad to exchange them for that everlasting happiness, which is *the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus*.

THIRDLY, In Baptism ye have renounced *all the sinful lusts of the flesh*. By which part of your vow ye have engaged yourselves to regulate, and govern, all those *appetites and inclinations*, which belong to you as men, and are implanted in your nature for very good and wise purposes. The lusts, or desires of the flesh, were not given to men for no other purpose than that they might be so many snares and temptations to them. Far be it from us to think so unworthily of the goodness of God. No : it is necessary to the present state of things, that ye should be so framed ; and these dispositions, under a proper restraint, are (no doubt) of singular use to you in your present situation. The affairs of the world could not be carried on without them ; and the counsels of Providence, in creating it, would be frustrated otherwise,

otherwise, and made of none effect. But when these appetites and desires are suffered to exceed their proper bounds; when they *govern*, instead of being in subjection; then do they become *sinful lusts of the flesh*, and such as ye have declared yourselves to be at enmity with. Hence proceed *drunkennes, gluttony, fornication, adultery, strife, envyings, murders*; and the like. These, with many others, are called by St. Paul, *the works of the flesh*; and all such works ye have declared an abhorrence of. Ye have vowed, that, by the help of God's grace, ye will not do them yourselves; nor in any-wise contribute to the doing of them, by giving encouragement or countenance to others. That ye may be the better able to perform this promise, let me advise you carefully to observe what sins of this kind ye are mostly inclined to. And although, with the Apostle, *Ye are assured that in your flesh dwelleth no good thing*; yet let it be your especial care to guard yourselves in the weakest part, where ye apprehend most danger of being overcome. Avoid every opportunity, as far as in you lies, by which ye may be enticed to commit any of these sins. In a more particular manner, shun idleness and sloth; and betake yourselves now, in the early time of age, to some honest and useful employment. They that do otherwise *make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*; that is, they give themselves up to *intemperance and loose conversation*, the constant companions of an idle life, whereby the lusts of the flesh are fed and nourished, and so prove unruly and past controul.

AND let this suffice for the first part of your baptismal vow, whereby ye promise to renounce the Devil, and all his works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; and all the sinful lusts
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of the flesh. Ye have declared, in the second place, That *ye will believe all the articles of the Christian faith.*

To *believe* a thing is to be well persuaded of the truth of it. And, although it is impossible for you to believe what ye please; yet in promising to believe all *the articles* of the Christian faith, ye do not undertake an impossibility. For they admit of no doubt, because they are the sum and substance of the *Christian faith*; as it stands clearly and plainly describ'd in the Holy Scriptures. They are what the members of the Christian Church therefore have generally believed, from the beginning of it to this day; although there have not been wanting such as have disputed concerning the meaning of some terms, in which these articles have been expressed. Now, it is your duty thoroughly to inform yourselves, *what* these articles of the Christian faith are, and *in what sense* they are to be understood; and whether ye yourselves do believe them, as they ought to be believed. In the first of these particulars, I will endeavour to inform you; in the latter, ye must inform yourselves, for nobody else is capable of doing it. Whether ye do truly, and heartily, believe the articles of the Christian faith, is a matter in which your own consciences are chiefly concerned. But, I may add, That, if ye lead your lives according to such a belief, ye have good reason to think that ye do not deceive yourselves or others, in this respect. For Christian *obedience* is the best sign of *Christian faith*; and, if ye do behave in every thing, according to the rules of the Gospel, I see no reason to doubt of your belief of the Gospel.

THESE then are the articles of the Christian faith; and this is the sense, in which they are to be believed

believed, as appears to us from the Holy Scriptures.

FIRST, ye are to believe, that there is *a God*, and but *one* God only; an eternal Being, infinite in *Perfection*, and the author. and giver of every thing which is *good*, and (in any degree) *perfect* in others: that He has all power in himself, by which He at first *created*, and does now *support*, and *govern*, all things in Heaven and Earth: that He is therefore the God, and Father, of *all Men*. And, ye do believe that, from all eternity, He was the Father of *our Lord Jesus Christ*.

IN like manner, ye are to believe, that *Jesus Christ* was always, from all eternity, *the Son of God*: that He took the name of *Jesus Christ* when made Man, as He was a Person consecrated and anointed by God for the redemption and salvation of Mankind: and that He thereby became *our Lord*, as he hath *purchased us with his blood*, and as *all power and authority* is exercised by Him over his Church.

WITH regard to *the manner* in which the Son of God took our flesh upon Him, and became visible to the world, that he might suffer for it; ye believe, that He was *conceived of the Holy Ghost*, and *born of the Virgin Mary*; that is, by the power and operation of God's Holy Spirit, a Woman was made to conceive and bring forth, without the ordinary means of generation, or the concurrence of a Man; and that from hence our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ had both a real *human Body* and a real *human Soul*, but without any stain of sin upon either of them, because of the extraordinary and holy manner in which He was produced.

YE believe, that the same Holy Person, after preaching Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins,

to the world, for some space of time, and after working many Miracles in confirmation of the truth of what He said, did *suffer under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, and descended into Hell*; that is, at such a precise time, foretold by the Prophets, (when the Jews were under the power of the Romans, and *Pontius Pilate*, a Roman, was their Governor) our Blessed Saviour did suffer from the Jews many grievous things, scourgings, mockings, buffetings and the like; that His Body, whilst He was yet alive, was fixed to a cross, after the manner of a criminal; that He did really die upon the cross; that *His Body*, when dead, was taken down thence, and laid in a grave; and that *His Soul* went to the place appointed for it, during its state of separation.

YE believe farther, that the same Jesus Christ, who was crucified, dead, and buried, *rose again the third day from the dead*; that is, after lying for that space of time in the grave, *His Soul was restored to His Body*, and He did leave His sepulchre, and did appear alive to many persons, for many days, with the same Soul and Body which He had before He was put to death. And this, ye are to believe, was done by *His own divine Power*, by which He was enabled to lay down His Life, and take it again.

YE believe also, that *He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty*; that is, when He had abode some time upon earth, after His Resurrection, and had conversed frequently with His Disciples, and others, He did, in the presence of many persons, go up from them, with His human Soul and Body, becoming invisible to the world from that time, and being

being advanced to a seat of the greatest honour and glory, in Heaven.

AND ye do believe, that He shall there continue, governing and directing His Church, and interceding for It with God the Father, until the end of the world, *when He shall come again to Judge both the Quick and the Dead*; that is, all those who shall be found then alive upon the earth, as well as those who are departed out of this life, shall appear before *the Judgment Seat of Christ*, at this His second coming; and shall be acquitted or condemned, rewarded or punished, according to what they have done, *whether it be good or evil*.

FARTHER, as ye believe in God *the Father* and God *the Son*, so do ye believe in God *the Holy Ghost* (or *the Holy Spirit*) who is the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, and of the same Divine Nature with the Father and the Son. He is called in Scripture the *Holy Spirit*, because it is by His means (more especially) that all the elect, or chosen people of God are sanctified, or *made holy*. As ye believe the *Father* to have been your *Creator*, and the *Son* your *Redeemer*, so ye believe the *Holy Ghost* to be your *Helper and Comforter*, in all things wherein ye stand in need more particularly of the Divine assistance. He enlightens your understandings, disposes your wills, and enables you to go through and perform every good and religious undertaking. He assists your prayers, strengthens you against temptations, and enables you to discern the malicious subtilities of the Devil, and the cheats and delusions of the World and the Flesh. He possesses you with the knowledge of your *true* interest, and is ever admonishing and encouraging you in the pursuit of it. Finally, by His sanctifying power, He unites you,

and all good Christians, to Christ your Head ; sealing your Souls with such an inward assurance of God's favour, that ye do firmly hope, and are persuaded in yourselves, that, through the mercies of God, ye shall be everlastingly happy in a future state.

AFTER ye have professed to believe thus in each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity ; ye declare also, that there is *one Church of Christ*, called *the Holy Catholick*, or holy and universal Church. The Church, here meant, is the general assembly of all such, as, from the first publishing of the Gospel to this present time, have believed in Christ, and who hereafter shall do the same, to the end of the world. Ye do profess therefore to believe, that all holy persons, who have died in the faith of Christ, and in the fear of God's holy Name, do continue members of Christ's Church, although they are removed out of our sight into a separate state ; and that they, with all good and pious Christians now remaining in the world, do make but one *Church*, or *Society*, as they are united under one and the same head, Jesus Christ ; that they are sanctified by the same Blessed Spirit, and shall one day partake of the same Happiness in the glorious Kingdom of God. Ye do farther profess to believe, that That part of Christ's Church which is here on Earth shall never entirely cease ; but that there shall always be a number of faithful persons continuing to believe, and practise, as they are taught in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the end of the world.

YE do also believe, that, in this Church of Christ, there is, and always will be a *Communion of Saints* : that is, that all true Christians, as well those who are departed out of this life, as those who remain in it, have *access to God the Father*, being in covenant with Him, *through Jesus Christ* :
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that they are in *communion* also with God the Son, who has *purchased* them with *His Blood*, and redeemed them to Himself; and, that they have the *Fellowship of the Holy Ghost*, who dwelleth in them, and is their Counsellor and Guide: that there is also so far an *intercourse* between good and holy *Men* on Earth and the *Angels* of God in Heaven, as that they have an affectionate regard for them, and delight in ministring to them, whenever they are commanded so to do. And, finally, ye believe, that the Members of Christ have, and ought to have *communion with one another*, not only in Prayer, and the ministry of God's holy Word and Sacraments, but in *love*, and *charity*, and *all good works*, whereby they can be beneficial to each other.

FARTHER, ye do believe, that, as members of the Christian Church, ye have the inestimable benefit of that most gracious promise of *the Forgiveness of Sins*: that is, that, by the sending His Son into the world, it has pleased Almighty God to issue out a free pardon to all such as shall embrace the *terms* of His holy Gospel: that, when all the wisdom of Man could not contrive an expedient whereby he might hope to be reconciled to God, and when the whole world was sunk into despair, through the burthen of their Sins, for which they could make no atonement, it pleased God, *in the bowels of His mercy*, to cause *tidings of great joy* to be proclaimed to the wretched Sons of Men, no less than a sure forgiveness of all their Sins by Repentance, and Faith in Christ Jesus. And, as *there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, by which we must be saved, but only that of the Lord Jesus*; ye believe that Forgiveness of Sins is not to be obtained in *any other way* than that which the Gospel prescribes; not from any au-
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thority which men may falsely and presumptuously arrogate to themselves; not by performing such things as the Gospel does not require you to do; but, by a *stedfast Faith in Christ Jesus*, and a *sincere Obedience to His Will and Commandments*.

YE do believe also, that there will be a *Resurrection of the Dead*: that is, that the Bodies of all Men (although now dissolved into dust, from whence they were at first taken) shall be raised from the Grave, and their Souls shall be again united to them; and, that the Bodies of the Faithful shall be restored to them in such a glorified state as to be capable of enjoying Everlasting Happiness, and the Bodies of the Wicked in such a state as shall make them sensible of Everlasting Misery and Torment.

FOR, finally, ye do believe that there will be a *Life everlasting*: that is, that, after the Resurrection from the Dead, ye will be translated into a state where ye can *never die any more*, and in which the Good will be happy, and the Wicked miserable, to all Eternity.

THIS is the Belief of a Christian, according to that Revelation which God has been pleased to make of Himself by His Son Christ Jesus; the truth of which ye must be really and fully persuaded of, if ye expect to receive any benefit from being Baptized in His Name. And, as these things are to be BELIEVED, so likewise are there many things to be DONE, in order to accomplish the eternal Salvation of your Souls. For, lastly, ye do promise to *keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your lives*. By this ye engage, that your outward actions shall be agreeable to the inward persuasion of your minds; and, that your Faith shall not be dead and unprofitable, but lively, active and fruitful

ful of good Works. The Will and Commandments of God ye have likewise revealed to you in *the Gospel* of His blessed Son; *the Moral Law*, given of old to the Jews, being there explained, improved and adapted to the state of mankind under the new covenant of Grace, by Jesus Christ Himself.

IN the first place, ye are not only to have *the Lord for your God*, and none other beside Him; but, from numerous passages of the New Testament, ye are taught and commanded to *believe in Him, to fear Him, to love Him, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks; to put your whole trust in Him; to call upon Him, to honour his holy Name and His Word; and to serve Him truly all the days of your lives.* The meaning of which, in short, is, that ye are neither to fear, nor to love any thing so much as GOD; because, whatever ye fear most, or love most, THAT ye make your God.

YE are commanded to avoid the sin of *Idolatry*; that is, either the worshipping God himself, or *Angels*, or *dead Men* or *Women*, under the form and shape of an Image; or *falling down before* any Image of either of these, or *the likeness of any thing in Heaven or Earth*, with intent to worship it. Ye are forbid also, even in your inmost thoughts, to put your confidence in any thing but the Goodness and Power of God, and the Merits of His Son Jesus Christ. And this ye are forbid to do, upon the highest Penalties; not only the loss of temporal blessings, or the bringing a curse upon You and your Children, but also the eternal perdition and destruction of your Souls, and a perpetual exclusion from the kingdom and presence of God hereafter.

YE are forbid to *swear lightly, and rashly, by God's holy Name.* And ye are taught farther, that neither should ye allow yourselves in swearing by any thing that is sacred and bears a relation to God; that ye should not swear by *Yourselves*, or any part of yourselves, inasmuch as *Ye* are the creatures of God, and consecrated to His service; nay, that ye should *not swear at all*, at any time, or upon any occasion; unless ye are called upon by proper *Authority* to do so, for the *ending of strife*, or for any other important and good purpose.

YE are commanded also to dedicate *the Sabbath, or every seventh day* of the week, to a rest from your ordinary labours; because God finished the Creation of the World in six days, ceased from work upon the seventh, and commanded a seventh day to be *kept holy* by all mankind. For we read (in Genesis ii. 3.) that *God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it*; that is, *commanded it to be kept holy.* And therefore it will always be your Duty, on account of the reasonableness of it, and God's pleasure signified herein, to observe and keep *holy one day in seven.* And, as your redemption was compleated by Jesus Christ's raising Himself from the dead upon *the first day of the week*, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to the Apostles of our Lord, under His immediate influence, to transfer the holiness of the Sabbath from the *seventh* to the *first day* of the week, and to cause this alteration to be observed *as an ordinance amongst all Christians for ever.* Ye are taught moreover, and commanded, to dedicate this Christian Sabbath, called (in the Book of Revelation i. 10.) *the Lord's Day*, not only to a rest of *your bodies* from the labours of your callings, but of *your minds* from all your wordly concerns. Ye
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are bid to spend this holy Day in the more immediate service and worship of God ; in prayer, in *breaking of bread*, that is, receiving the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (as often as ye enjoy an opportunity) in meditation, in reading, in hearing the Word of God preached and explained ; and in works of mercy, charity, and piety.

THESE are the duties ye are to discharge towards GOD. With regard to your *Neighbour*, or one another, ye are called upon, in the first place, to pay due honour and reverence to your *Parents* ; to obey all their lawful commands ; to submit to their corrections ; and to comfort and succour them in their distress. Farther ; ye are to be dutiful to your *Civil Parents*, as well as your natural ones ; that is, ye are to obey the *Magistrates* which are set over you, not only out of a dread of punishment, but also for the satisfaction of your own consciences ; as they are *the Ordinance of God*, and appointed by Him to govern and protect you. Ye are to be obedient also to *Masters, Teachers, and Governors*. In every station of life, in short, ye are to behave suitably to the subordination in which ye are placed ; and to exercise your authority righteously, and *in the fear of God*, over all those (if any such there are) who are inferior to You.

AGAIN, ye are forbid to take away the Life of any man, either secretly or openly, either by acting yourselves, or by assisting others ; *Ye shall do no Murder*. And not only so, but (according to the Gospel-explanation of this commandment) ye shall check and moderate *your anger*, from whence Murder generally proceeds. For, if ye let anger transport you so far as to revile others with *hard speeches*, ye shall not be guiltless. *Out of the Heart are the issues of Life* ; that is, as men Think, they

generally Act; and, if they do not act accordingly, they are not always restrained by the fear of God, which ought to be one of the rules of their whole conduct. Ye are to see then that your hearts be not evil; that no *malice, envy, or revenge* be suffered to harbour there; for he that wills or wishes the death of another is (with God, *the searcher of hearts*) accounted no less guilty than if he had accomplished it.

THE same may be said of the next commandment. For, although ye are forbid to *commit* only the act of *Adultery*, yet, according to our Blessed Saviour's interpretation of it, every inclination or disposition of the mind towards it is criminal. And therefore ye are hereby obliged to keep your minds, as well as your bodies, in *temperance, sobriety and chastity*. That is, ye are to regulate even your thoughts and desires, lest they finally lead you into sins of Uncleanness; or, if they do not, yet the very entertainment of them in your minds is offensive to God, and will compel His Holy Spirit to leave you; who (ye may suppose) will not dwell with such company, in so foul and debauched an habitation. Holy Scripture expressly tells us, that *Marriage is honourable to all*; but that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*. Heb. xiii. 4.

FARTHER, ye are forbid to *Steal*; that is, to defraud your Neighbour of his goods, in any of the various ways which the wickedness of men's hearts has contriv'd to injure one another in their property. On the contrary, ye are to be fair and upright in all your dealings; to be careful to provide for yourselves and your families, by your own labour and pains; and to be thoroughly contented with that honest livelihood which Providence has allotted you. So far should ye be from defraud-
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ing others, that, if ye are defrauded yourselves, ye shall not be *over-forward* to recover your just rights by Law. Ye shall be ready to forgive injuries of *this* kind, as well as others; provided ye are at liberty so to do, and the consequences of your forgiveness may not be very hurtful to yourselves or others.

AGAIN, ye are forbid to *bear false witness against your neighbour*: that is, ye are strictly to speak the truth concerning him, if ye are called upon as witnesses for or against him, in a Court of Justice. On every such occasion, forget not the great guilt of *Perjury*, and how dreadful must be the danger of *calling God to be witness to a solemn Lie*; and be sure to remember the words of God himself, (Zachariah viii. 16.) *Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and LOVE NO FALSE OATH; for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.* In common conversation also, when there is a necessity of speaking of your Neighbour, ye are to say nothing of him but what ye know to be the truth, without any aggravations or insinuations which may hurt his good Name. But, as Christians, ye are to be *charitable* in every thing ye think or say of others; ye are not unreasonably to suspect any evil; ye are to vindicate their Characters as far as ye are able, and to preserve their Reputation with tenderness and care.

FINALLY, to secure the observation of all the foregoing Commandments which relate to your Neighbour, ye are forbid to entertain any unlawful desires, with regard to his *House*, his *Wife*, his *Servants*, and his *Goods*; that is, ye are not to *covet* what is another's, not *so to desire it as to use any unlawful means for the attainment of it.*

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THIS is the substance of the *Moral Law*, given of old to the Jews ; and renewed, explained and improved by Christ, for the use and practice of the whole Christian World.

BUT, besides the *Moral Law*, contained in the Ten Commandments, ye are obliged as *Christians* to obey those positive Laws which our Blessed Saviour hath been pleased to *add* to them ; and which do therefore more peculiarly belong to *Your* holy profession. These are the Commands by which He hath appointed two Sacraments to be received in His Church ; namely, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. The former (which hath been already explained) is the dipping in, or sprinkling with *Water*, at the time of your entrance into Christ's Church, when ye take the Vow of Christianity upon you. The latter is the eating *Bread* and drinking *Wine* (as often as ye have opportunity) in communion with your Fellow Members of the Church, to preserve thereby a memorial of Christ's Death, until His coming to Judgment. And these ye are to look upon, not as empty ceremonies, or as mere emblems of something else signified thereby ; for our Blessed Saviour has promised, that the receiving His Sacraments shall be accompanied by His *special Grace*, whensoever it is done faithfully and with a sincere and penitent Heart ; that, as your Bodies are sprinkled and cleansed with *Water*, so shall your Sins be washed away, and your Souls purified by His *Holy Spirit* ; and that, as by breaking *Bread* and pouring out *Wine* ye do fitly represent His *Body broken* and His *Blood shed* upon the Cross, so shall ye thereby ensure to yourselves the benefits of His Death, which ye so thankfully commemorate ; and, as your Bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the Bread and Wine, so shall your Souls be comforted, and the
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Christian Graces (ye are endowed with) be quickened and revived. As ye have been already Baptized into the Name of Jesus Christ, let me exhort you not to lose the Benefit of *one* Sacrament by a neglect of *the other*. For, be assured, that *they are* both of them *equally necessary to your Salvation*. If ye do habitually absent yourselves from the Lord's Supper, it will but little avail you that ye have been admitted into his Church by Baptism. It will not then be uncharitable to think of you, that ye would have neglected Baptism, in like manner, had it been left to your own choice whether ye would be Baptized or not. For the same faith, and the same repentance, and purposes of a good life, which are required of you to prepare for Baptism, are as necessary for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper. And, if ye refuse to qualify yourselves for *this*, it may well be supposed that neither would ye have qualified yourselves for *that*. So that, if no person had brought you to Baptism when ye were Infants, and had undertaken that ye should fulfil the conditions of it, it is probable ye might and would have died *Unbaptized*. Examine yourselves thoroughly, and see that ye are perfectly sincere in this great matter. For, if ye deceive yourselves herein, nothing can be of more fatal consequence to your Souls. Convince yourselves and the world that ye heartily embrace the terms of your Baptism, by fulfilling the terms in a *frequent receiving of the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood*. And let me earnestly advise you to enter upon this necessary Duty *now*, in your *younger* years, as soon as ye have informed yourselves of what is required from those who come to the Lord's Table. For it is found by experience, that they who absent themselves from it whilst they are young, are not brought

brought to it without great difficulty when they are advanced in years. Some are discouraged by the increasing burthen of their Sins; and others, merely by the force of an evil habit, continue in a neglect of this important and necessary duty. But, if ye begin *early* to appear at the Lord's Table ye will escape both these delusions: Ye will neither be terrified by your guilt, which as yet, it is to be hoped, is not very great; neither will ye be seduced by any evil custom, which ye have taken care to prevent. What is required of those who come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper your Prayer Books will instruct you; it being clearly and plainly expressed in the Exhortation before the Communion Office. "Repent
 "ye truly for your sins past; Have a lively and
 "stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour; Amend
 "your lives; Be in perfect charity with all men;
 "And, above all, give most hearty thanks to God
 "the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy
 "Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the
 "death and passion of our Saviour Christ: so shall
 "ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries."
 Ye may observe, that, in these words, there is nothing enjoined you but what every Christian, at all times, is obliged to perform. When therefore this is called a *Preparation* for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper, nothing more is meant by it than that, upon this occasion more particularly, *ye should examine yourselves, whether ye do truly and faithfully perform what it is always your duty to do.* If ye do this, rejoice, and persevere, If ye do not; repent, and resolve (by God's grace) to reform. There is no new task laid upon you (as some people are apt to imagine) in preparing yourselves for the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; only ye are obliged to enquire in-

to the state of your Souls, and see whether your *Belief*, and *Practice*, is such as becometh Christians. And can this be done too often? Can it be safely put off from time to time? Will not your Sins daily encrease upon you; and will they not encrease the faster, because ye neglect *the grace of God* offered to you in this Sacrament? And will not this Neglect add to the number of your Sins? Will they not, many of them, when thus encreased, escape your memory; and therefore not be particularly repented of? May ye not be cut off in the midst of them, or disabled by Sicknets from recollecting them? Surely, there is no excuse can avail you at all, if these things are duly considered. *I charge you therefore*, as ye hope for Eternal Salvation, thankfully to embrace every opportunity of receiving the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. *Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord.* Draw near with faith; and receive these pledges of the Love of your Redeemer to your comfort. Offer to Almighty God this your Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving; Yourself also, *your Souls and Bodies*, to be a reasonable, holy and lively Sacrifice unto Him; humbly beseeching Him, that, as ye are Partakers of His Holy Communion, ye may be filled with His Grace and Heavenly Benediction. So shall ye be conducted by His Holy Spirit through the snares and temptations of this mortal state with safety: so shall ye fully know, diligently bear in mind, and sincerely practise every Christian duty: so shall *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always.*

THUS

THUS have I set before you all that ye are to *believe* and *do*, as Christians, in order to the attainment of Everlasting Life. But, since the nature of Man is such, at present, that ye can do no good thing of yourselves; and that therefore ye have need of the Divine assistance in every thing which relates to your faith and practice; I must farther put you in remembrance of *the duty of constant Prayer*. Without this, ye are assured from many passages in Scripture, that all your endeavours to be good will be accounted presumptuous, and therefore will have no effect. For your entire dependance is upon God; and ye cannot, by your own power, provide for the necessities either of your Souls or Bodies. It is HE who giveth you food and raiment, and all the necessities and conveniences of life. It is HE also, who puts it into our hearts both to *will*, and *perform*, what is acceptable and well-pleasing to Himself. If ye can so far prevail over the corruption of your nature, as to think humbly of yourselves, and to apply to the Throne of Grace for the supply of all your wants; ye are gone as far as of yourselves ye are able to go. Thenceforward ye must use your utmost endeavours, (the sincerity of your hearts will require it of you) but they will not be effectual without the blessing of God, which alone can give them success. You see then *the absolute necessity* of Prayer. In regard to which the Church ye more particularly belong to hath provided you with a Publick Form, to be used as often as ye meet together for the worship of God. It was composed by good and holy Men, as appears from that Spirit of true piety and devotion which breathes throughout the whole. Ye will do well therefore in paying a due regard to it; and it will become you to lose no opportunity

tunity of joining in it devoutly in the publick Church. The same Prayers may be of service to you likewise in your *private* Devotions ; there being scarcely any one circumstance of life to which there are not Petitions properly suited in the Common Prayer Book of the Church. Indeed there is one circumstance, which could not be provided for in the Publick Service, because it relates to your duty at home ; I mean *saying Grace before and after Meat* : that is, first *begging God's blessing upon your Food*, and afterwards *returning God thanks for it*. And however, strangely this practice be neglected by some, and very carelessly performed by many others ; yet our own reason and Holy Scripture (with the examples of *Christ* and of *St. Paul*, together with the examples of the ancient *Heathens* likewise) should teach all Christians to perform this duty with decency and devotion. As to Prayer upon other (general) occasions ; because the ignorance and weakness of Mankind is such, that they can neither help themselves, nor do well understand the manner in which they may address themselves to God for help ; it has pleased our Blessed Saviour to instruct His Church to pray, as they ought, in that short and perfect form which is called by His Name. So that, however imperfect those prayers may be which ye make yourselves, or which good and devout Men have made for your use, yet are ye assured that ye are provided with *one Prayer*, in which all your wants are properly summed up, and which, if rightly offered, will not fail of meeting with acceptance. And this (*the Lord's Prayer*) at least may, and must be used, morning and evening, by every person how poor and ignorant soever.

In the Lord's Prayer ye address yourselves to Almighty God, who, through the mediation of
His

His Blessed Son, vouchsafeth to be called *Your Father*, and the common Father of all Christians, although ye worthily deserve to be punished for your sins, and to be utterly cast out of His favour. And although he is infinite and incomprehensible, and the whole Universe is filled with His greatness, yet, because His glory is manifested chiefly in *Heaven*, and from thence is revealed to the children of men, ye are taught to call Him *Your Father, which is in Heaven*.

YE pray, or signify, that it is, above all things, your sincere and hearty desire, that, as *His Name* (or His Being and Attributes) is holy, fearful, and glorious, so it may be *hallowed*, that is, sanctified, revered and adored, by all men in every place, and throughout all generations for ever: that *Yourselfes* more particularly may have your hearts cleansed, and filled with His Grace; and that, in all your thoughts, words and actions, ye may endeavour to promote His honour and Glory.

FOR the better accomplishment of this your sincere desire, ye pray, that *God's Kingdom may come*; that the knowledge of His holy Name may be spread throughout the whole world; that the dominion of Sin and Satan may be entirely destroyed by the Light of Christ's Gospel; and that the blessed time may not be delayed, when Ye, with all those who have died in His faith and fear, shall be translated into His heavenly Kingdom.

YE pray, that, in the mean while, *God's holy Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*. That is, ye declare, that ye are entirely resigned to all the dispensations of His good Providence; and are ready to do and suffer every thing which cometh of His divine appointment: that ye willingly and heartily submit to all the rules and methods

thods which He hath commanded you to walk by. And although it may be impossible for you ever to attain to such a perfection of obedience in this present life, yet it is your sincere wish and desire, that *Yourselfes and all Men*, throughout the whole world, were enabled to perform the Will of God, with the same readiness and the same exactness as it is performed by *the Angels in Heaven*; that as the blessed Spirits, the Messengers of God, do speedily and chearfully execute all His commands, so His faithful servants on earth (as far as the infirmities of their flesh will permit them) may constantly and gladly obey Him in all things.

AFTER thus professing, that your chief concern is for the advancement of God's honour and glory, ye proceed in your petitions, by begging of Him to *give you this day your daily bread*. Hereby ye humbly acknowledge, that all things depend upon His gracious Providence, that the eyes of all creatures look up to *Him, who giveth them their meat in due season*, and provideth them with all things out of his bounteous liberality. Therefore ye beseech Him to give *You* also all the necessities and conveniences of life; which although ye are allowed to call them *Your* daily bread, are not *Yours* of right, but come from the free bounty of God, and by His blessing upon your labours. Ye pray, that He would continue to bless your labours; that neither Ye, nor your families, may ever be in want of what He may judge necessary, or proper, for your support. And, by thus confessing that your whole reliance is upon His goodness, and mercy, ye oblige yourselves to return Him all possible thanks and praise, for the manifold blessings ye daily receive at his hands.

FARTHER, ye beseech God to *forgive you your trespasses*, to blot out all your sins, and release you from the punishment of them, *as ye forgive them that trespass against you* : that is, although men's forgiveness of each other bears no proportion to the forgiveness they stand in need of from God, yet, as it has pleased God to make this a necessary condition of *Your* being forgiven, ye do humbly hope, that, if ye are in perfect charity with all men, and do truly repent you of your sins, ye shall meet with pardon at the Throne of His Grace. At the same time, ye do hereby declare, that ye have no hopes of pardon, unless ye fulfil this condition ; and do engage therefore to *forgive others their trespasses*, so far as is consistent with God's laws, and the preservation of peace and order in the world.

BUT, lest ye should meet with trials in this or any other respect too strong for you to encounter, ye beg of God *not to lead you into temptation, but to deliver you from evil*. Ye make it your humble request, that ye may not be seduced from your obedience either by prosperity or afflictions ; that, whatsoever station of life it may please God to appoint you to, and in whatsoever circumstances ye are placed, ye may (by the help of His Grace) steadily pursue your duty, and do nothing unbecoming your Christian profession ; that ye may not be permitted to yield to the delusions of *the flesh, the world, or the Devil* ; but that ye may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God against all these your enemies, and, being protected from their power, may pass the course of your lives with integrity and innocence.

FINALLY, ye declare, that ye are firmly persuaded that ye ought to offer all your prayers and praises to *God only* ; that ye do not, in any degree,

gree, trust in yourselves, or in any other creature, for the succels of your petitions ; but that God, and God alone, can and will (ye humbly hope) relieve all your wants, both spiritual and temporal ; *for His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.* He is the absolute Governor of the whole Universe, the Almighty Disposer of all events ; He can do whatsoever He will, and nothing is brought to pass in Heaven or Earth without His permission.

YE conclude all by saying *Amen.* Whereby ye expresse your earnest desire, that God would be pleased most graciously to grant whatsoever ye have asked ; and, at the same time, ye signify your humble confidence in Him, that, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, this Prayer of His blessed Son will be heard and accepted by Him.

THIS then is the Prayer which our blessed Saviour has left for the use of His Church, and every particular Member of it. So that it is impossible ye should err when ye address yourselves to God in this form of words, or in any form agreeable hereto. Let it be your constant care so to order your thoughts and actions, that ye may be always *in a capacity of using it.* For otherwise ye will provoke God's anger against you by your rashness and presumption, and bring a *curse* upon yourselves instead of a *blessing.* Approach Him not therefore with this Prayer, unless ye are sincere in your desires and endeavours, that *yourselves* and all mankind may be obedient to His will, and that His name may be revered, and His glory exalted throughout the whole earth. See that ye do not entertain in your minds an absolute dependance upon any thing but the goodness of God for the relief of all your wants. Be ready
to

to forgive injuries, and lose no opportunity of doing good to all Men. Trust not to your own strength, in the many trials and temptations incident to this your mortal state; but be assured that it is *God* alone who can protect you from the snares of this world, and the subtilty and malice of your Ghostly Enemy. Finally, be persuaded that *all power* is in God only; that no evil can harm you without His permission, no good befall you but by his grace and favour; for He ruleth over all things for ever and ever, and as His *authority* has no bounds, so will His *kingdom* and *glory* never have an end.

THUS have I, briefly and plainly, set before you *the whole duty of a Christian*; putting you in remembrance of what ye ought to *believe* and *do* in order to be saved. It is my hearty prayer to God for *you*, that, by His grace, He would enable you to practise it in truth and sincerity. And I entreat your prayers for *me* also, that I may do the same; that if it so pleaseth God, we may mutually receive benefit from each other. Here ye have the substance of all that has been or will be preached to you; and I send it to you summed up in this little Book, that ye may have it *always* before your eyes, and, by often reading it, may imprint it deeply in your memories. I address it chiefly to *You* who are of the *younger* sort; because, at your first setting out in the world, ye have need of a Guide to direct you in the right way; because Ye are not entered, or at least not far gone (I hope) *in the path that leadeth to destruction*; and more particularly, because ye live in dangerous times, when ye have few good examples, but many, very many bad ones before you; and therefore are more likely to be seduced. I am sorry I have occasion to observe any thing
which

which is to the discredit of the present Age, but most certain it is, that, in every station of life, the manners of Men are greatly corrupted. And not only so, but many seem to grow slack in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and some to have totally forsaken it. Who knows but God may put it into your hearts seriously to consider the present unhappy state of Christ's Church, and incline you to use your utmost endeavours to reform it? At least He may enable You to order your own lives as ye ought; and, by preserving You from infection in your younger years, it may so happen that the succeeding generation may be better than the present. This seems to be the only hope which is now left us; and for *Your own sakes*, for the sake of *Mankind*, for the sake of *Virtue and Religion*, and for *Jesus Christ's sake*, do not disappoint it.

Be strong and courageous, and dare to be good under all the present disadvantages of Virtue and Piety. Pursue no other pleasure but that of innocence, which alone can give you true satisfaction and peace of mind. Remember, that none but *sincerely good* Christians have a right to be *cheerful*. These are the men who are commanded by St. Paul to *rejoice in the Lord always*; and indeed every Christian's motto should be, *Serve God, and be joyful*. Be therefore prudent, in regard to your best and dearest interest, your true pleasure here and hereafter. Forget not your obligations to Him *in whom ye live, and move, and have your being*; and let your thoughts frequently dwell on that *lively hope of eternal happiness* to which ye are begotten through Christ Jesus. Think with yourselves, that although ye may live *many years*, yet it is not impossible that ye may be cut off in a few days; that, be your lives ever so long,

long, yet are they really short, and will appear to you much shorter as they approach to an end ; that ye cannot therefore begin *too early* to be good, neither will it be safe for you to lose *the present opportunity*. Consider how many thousands there are, who, reflecting upon their past conduct, would give the whole world (if it was at their disposal) to be in *your* time of life. If they were suffered to begin their days again, how watchful would they be over themselves ! how cautious of offending God in any one action, or thought ! Every wilful Sin they have formerly committed is now as *a Viper in their bosoms*, the sting of which leaves a smart not to be endured. The infirmities of old age are tolerable enough to them, but *a wounded Spirit* who can bear ? Yet such will be *Your* condition, wretched as it is, if ye are guilty of the same folly, and tread in their steps. Learn from *their* examples, to make a good use of the present time ; and, if ye are sensible, (as ye must needs be) of *their* unhappy case, take effectual care that, one time or other, it may not be *yours* also. How will ye condemn yourselves hereafter, if ye are so unwise as to lose the present opportunity, which cannot be retrieved ? Ye will then reflect with sorrow upon your evil course of life, and stand amazed at your own folly in neglecting the good advice here kindly given you.

If ye continue wicked, consider, when the time of your departure out of this world shall draw near, which way will ye then look for comfort, or what will ye do to be at peace with yourselves ? If ye turn your eyes upon your *past lives*, ye will find nothing there but what will give you grief and vexation. And, if ye look *forwards*, how terrible will be the prospect of God's anger, whom
ye

ye have made it your business to offend? For remember, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* But, on the other hand; a well-spent life, proceeding from early habits of virtue and goodness, will leave no room to question *the sincerity of your obedience,* but will lay a foundation for a reasonable hope, that *God will be favourable to you.* Ye will have the pleasure of thinking, that ye made it your first choice to do His Will, and were not compelled to it by your natural fears and apprehensions: that ye kept your innocence, when ye were courted, bribed and importuned on all sides to part with it; that ye never entered into the *service* of Sin, and therefore have no title to *its wages.*

BUT, in what language can I describe to you the joy and transport which attends the conclusion of a *regular and good* life? When the time approaches that ye shall be called upon to give an account to God, how will it delight you to think that it has been your sincere endeavour to obey His Will? What pleasure will it be to reflect upon the dangers ye have escaped, the evil ye have forborn, and the good ye have done? *Oh! that I had led a better life!* is, and ought to be the wish of every man, good as well as bad, when He comes to die. But, whilst the old Sinner reproaches himself with a neglect of every duty, *your consciences will bear you witness, that, from your youth up, ye have endeavoured to fulfil the Commandments of God.* Hence will ye be encouraged to look forward also with an humble hope, that, through the merits of Christ Jesus, ye shall be accepted of Him. Death, it is true, is such a change as ye cannot but be oftentimes thoughtful and solicitous about: But remember, that *the sting of Death is Sin;* and, when Death

is once disarmed, the terror of it is much abated. Good men therefore, for the most part, die with perfect resignation and satisfaction of mind. Nay, we sometimes meet with instances of such as express great joy in the exchange of this life for a better. And *Ye* will do the same, if ye order your conversation according to my advice. For, what can effectually and really *harm you*, so long as ye are *at peace with God*? Although your Souls are to be separated from your Bodies for a time, yet nothing can *separate you from the love of God*. Ye cannot be removed beyond the reach of his Mercy and Loving-Kindness: **THAT** will follow you through every state, and uphold and comfort you in every change ye undergo.

BUT, after Death, there will be no farther change; your condition then will be fixed to all Eternity. *When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, Ye shall also appear with Him in Glory.* It is Your Father's good pleasure, little Flock, to give You the Kingdom. For there is laid up for You a crown of righteousness; which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give You in that day, and not to You only, but to all them who love His appearing. And Blessed be the God, and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, according to His abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us.



A PRAYER to be used every Morning.

O Almighty God, I give Thee most humble thanks, for that Thou hast been pleased to preserve me from the dangers of the night past. Defend me this Day, I beseech Thee, and also my Relations and Friends, from all evil Accidents, and more especially from all temptations to Sin. Let all my doings be ordered by Thy Governance; and let me ever remember, that my most secret thoughts, and actions, are before Thee, and open to Thy sight. Grant, that I may always walk in Thy fear, studying to serve and please Thee, in all things; and having been protected by Thy goodness here, may be taken to Thy mercy hereafter, through the merits, and mediation, of Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. Amen.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy Kingdom come; thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven; give us this Day our daily Bread; and forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil; for thine is the Kingdom: and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A PRAYER to be used every Night.

O Almighty God, I give Thee most humble thanks for Thy merciful preservation of me this day. I beseech Thee to pardon me in every thing wherein I may have offended Thee; and to give me Thy Grace, that I may never do the like again. I thank Thee for all Thy mercies vouchsafed unto me from the beginning of my Life to this present time; for my health, food
and

and comfort, and more particularly my friends and
 acquaintances, whom I beseech Thee to bless and reward,
 for all their kindness and love. I commit myself to
 Thy gracious protection this night; humbly begging,
 that Thy good providence may continue always to watch
 over me. And grant, I may so order the whole course
 of my life that I may finally inherit thine everlasting
 kingdom, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Re-
 deemer. Amen.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

At coming into Church.

O LORD, pardon my Sins, and receive my
 Prayers; and may thy Word, here delivered, make
 me wise unto Salvation: through Jesus Christ, our
 Lord. Amen.

After divine Service.

O LORD, pardon the imperfection both of my
 Prayers and Praises; and incline me, not only to hear
 Thy Word, but to obey the same: through Jesus
 Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace before Meat.

Bless, O LORD, (we beseech Thee) this Re-
 freshment to our Use, and us to thy Service: through
 Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace after Meat.

For this, and all thy Mercies, O GOD, we
 bless and praise thy holy Name: through Jesus Christ,
 our Lord. Amen.